DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 846 EA 023 333

TITLE	The Administration's Education Reform Proposal. Hearing on Examining the Administration's Proposal To Reform the National Education System before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources. United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, First Session.
INSTITUTION	Congress of the U.S., Washington, D.C. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-16-035419-6; Senate-Hrg-102-146
PUB DATE	23 Apr 91
NOTE	45p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402 (Stock No. 552-070-110-41-1: $1.50).
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Change Strategies; Committees; *Educational Change; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Government Publications; Hearings; Legislators; *Public Schools; *School Choice; School Restructuring
IDENTIFIERS	*America 2000; Congress 102nd

ABSTRACT

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, chairman of the committee, opened the hearing by commending President Bush and U.S. Department of Education Secretary Lamar Alexander for putting forward an education reform plan. Kennedy then stated his reservations: the plan does not devote enough attention to school readiness; the administration emphasizes choice as a way to improve schools; and the proposals involve no new resources for education. Secretary Alexander's presentation summarizes the President's four-part strategy by comparing it to four large trains headed toward the national goals, all at one time. This is followed by a prepared statement by Senator Strom Thurmond in support of the plan. Questions by the senators on the committee and responses by Alexander compose the remainder of the hearing. Among the topics raised are the following: school readiness, the choice issue, accountability to public authority, children with disabilities, absence of full funding for Head Start, testing, the school year, economically disadvantaged children, the imbalance of resources between communities, and concern for the 70 percent of students who are not college-bound. Secretary Alexander explained that the proposed funding is for school districts or states that would like to try to give families a broader choice of the schools their children attend, including nonpublic schools. Editorials inserted into the record by Senator Cochran from newspapers in Tennessee and Mississippi conclude the publication. (MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED337846

S. HRG. 102-146

THE ADMINISTRATION'S EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSAL

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

EXAMINING THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

APRIL 23, 1991

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 023 353

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
46-152 cc WASHINGTON : 1991

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402
ISBN 0-16-035419-6

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

EDWARD M. KENNEDY, Massachusetts, *Chairman*

CLAIBORNE PELL, Rhode Island
HOWARD M. METZENBAUM, Ohio
CHRISTOPHER J. DODD, Connecticut
PAUL SIMON, Illinois
TOM HARKIN, Iowa
BROCK ADAMS, Washington
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI, Maryland
JEFF BINGAMAN, New Mexico
PAUL D. WELLSTONE, Minnesota

ORRIN G. HATCH, Utah
NANCY LANDON KASSEBAUM, Kansas
JAMES M. JEFFORDS, Vermont
DAN COATS, Indiana
STROM THURMOND, South Carolina
DAVE DURENBERGER, Minnesota
THAD COCHRAN, Mississippi

NICK LITTLEFIELD, *Staff Director and Chief Counsel*
KRISTINE A. IVERSON, *Minority Staff Director*

CONTENTS

STATEMENTS

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1991

	Page
Alexander, Hon. Lamar, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education; accompanied by Bruno Mano, Acting Assistant Secretary of Education for Research and Statistics	2
Thurmond, Hon. Strom, a U.S. Senator from the State of South Carolina, prepared statement	7

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Articles, publications, etc.:	
School Storm—Bush Becomes Education President, from the Commerical Appeal, April 23, 1991	38
Education Expert Practices Bush's School Plan, from the Clarion-Ledger, April 23, 1991	40

THE ADMINISTRATION'S EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSAL

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1991

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Edward M. Kennedy [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Kennedy, Pell, Wellstone, Hatch, Kassebaum, Coats, Thurmond, Durenberger, and Cochran.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY

The CHAIRMAN. We will come to order.

The committee is meeting this morning to consider President Bush's proposal for education reform.

First of all, I want to commend President Bush and Secretary Alexander for putting forward this plan. After a decade of neglect in education policy, I am delighted that the administration has finally acknowledged that excellence in education is America's most effective building block for long-term economic growth and social progress.

I hope the administration is in the education debate to stay. We have had too many false starts. As President Bush said last week, we must move past the rhetoric and past the planning and start taking the difficult actions that we all know will be required.

There are a number of promising ideas in the administration's plan. Making sure that school children have access to social services, rewarding schools and students that do a good job, and developing the concept of teacher academies are all measures that Senate Democrats have strongly supported, and I hope we can expedite their enactment.

But I have reservations about some aspects of the administration's plan. First, it does not devote enough attention to school readiness. The first education goal is that all students start school ready to learn. The best schools in the world will be worth much less if that goal is not met. Any education reform worth its name must address this central concern.

Second, the administration emphasizes choice as a way to improve schools. The Senate has endorsed the idea of public school choice. One of the most successful models is in Cambridge, Massachusetts. But the administration's proposal goes overboard on choice. By offering public dollars to private schools, including reli-

gious schools, the administration is reopening the bitter and divisive policy and constitutional debates of the past about public aid to private schools.

In addition, the administration's plan calls for modifying the successful and popular Chapter 1 program. Many of us are reluctant to tamper with a tried and proven program to pay for the experimental.

Third, the administration's proposals involve no new resources for education. Rather, they would eliminate cost-of-living increases for existing programs and use these funds for new initiatives. Robbing old education programs to pay for new ones is nothing more than education strip mining. We should not, as a matter of policy, look only to current school programs as the source of new funds for school reform. That is not the way we paid for the Persian Gulf war, and it is not the way we will win the battle for better education.

Despite these reservations, the administration has clearly changed the framework of the debate. With Secretary Alexander's leadership, I am convinced that a healthy and long overdue debate on American education is now becoming in earnest. I welcome that debate.

Neither the administration nor Congress can do the job alone. But together we can make a start and encourage State and local governments and the private sector to work more closely together as well. I look forward to Secretary Alexander's testimony and to expediting action by Congress on the best possible legislation. America's schools have been waiting too long for our answer to the challenges they face.

Lamar Alexander is Secretary of Education. This is his second appearance before the Labor Committee since his confirmation. I am glad to welcome him back. He is accompanied by Bruno Mano, the acting Assistant Secretary of Education for Research and Statistics, and he is a civil servant who has done excellent work at the Education Department for many years. We are glad to have you.

Secretary.

STATEMENT OF HON. LAMAR ALEXANDER, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; ACCOMPANIED BY BRUNO MANO, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF EDUCATION FOR RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, thank you for your call last week inviting me to come today. That is a strong signal of what you have said ever since I have arrived, and other members of the committees have, which is that this committee is accustomed to working in a bipartisan way, and that is the way we would like to work.

I notice a number of either new proposals or old proposals refashioned that were brought before your committee last week. Last Thursday the President outlined a number of ideas in his long-term strategy to help America move toward its education goals. Sixteen or 17 of the 44 action items in the President's strategy of last Thursday would require some sort of consideration by the United States Congress if they were to be enacted. We are working hard at

the Department of Education to take that strategy and turn those items into legislative proposals so that we can have before you within the next month, sooner if we can, legislation that would incorporate the part of the President's strategy that has to do with Federal legislation.

What I will be glad to do today is anything you would like for me to do. I thought what I most usefully could do is summarize some of the parts of the President's strategy and then try to respond to your questions or that of any other member of the committee.

I have a letter, which I believe you now have. This is a letter which we had delivered previously to the Committee on Appropriations, and I thought it might be helpful to you and the members of the committee because it outlines specifically the ideas that are within the proposal that would require legislation.

Let me go back to the beginning, though, in terms of the President's proposal and what it seeks to do. Education is a personal and a national problem, the President recognizes, not a Federal Government problems exclusively or even mainly, and not normally the prerogative of the President. It is a problem not just in America but everywhere in the world, but because this is America, other countries look to us for some sort of leadership in education, which is how well we are able to adjust and change to the way the world is and learn to deal with it and to use knowledge.

The problem we have in America seems to be boiling down to one, and that is that suddenly the world has changed and we need to know more and be able to do more in order to successfully live and work in the world the way it is today. We are talking about making a life as well as making a living. People are as interested in learning why the Hubble telescope is way out in space and what it is learning and what it is doing there as they are in getting a better job, we believe.

So we had to think about what can the President do that would help America move itself toward the education goals. We thought of four major problems that we felt like we should attack or help the country attack. I will ask that they be put up on the chart if that is acceptable.

There are a great many problems we have in America, but the first one is the idea "The Nation is at risk, but I'm OK". I just heard Frank Newman, the head of the Education Commission of the States, say in a meeting a little earlier with Members of the U.S. Senate that that is our biggest and first obstacle to overcome, the idea that "it is not my problem." People say that. They have heard that America has an education problem. They are uneasy about this country that is supposed to be the first in the world not seeming like it might be when we measure our children's knowledge, for example, of math. But they are not ready to accept the idea that it is our school, our family, our child that is not learning enough and doing enough. That is the first problem we sought to solve.

The second problem we sought to address was the frustration that the Nation feels about the 1980's. We have ended our first decade of what we call education reform, and some things are better and some things are not. And overall the net result seems to be that after a lot of work we are still idling our engines. A lot of

what we must have been doing is too slow or too timid. I think back on some of the things that I tried to do in Tennessee working with the legislature and others, and we thought that idea, for example, of paying more for teaching well was a bold idea. We are still the only State that does that on a wholesale basis for teachers. Yet all the energy that was expended in that took 5 years, and it was only one part of the problem. So in some way, we need to be bolder.

Then the third problem we sought to address, even though all those other problems are important, has to do with the parents, with underskilled grownups. The President may have set the example for that the other day when he said he at his age is going back to school, that he wants to learn computers. He doesn't know about computers. The truth is that the largest number of underskilled, under-educated Americans are the grownups, the parents, not the children. And if we really want to move the country in the decade of the 1990's, it would be those of us who are grownup going back to school; because if the world has changed and our children need to know more and be able to do more, then that is true for us, too.

Then, finally—and this goes, Mr. Chairman, directly to the concerns that you were expressing—the President is trying to recognize that 91 percent of a child's time between the time he or she is born and the time we get to be 18 is spent outside the classroom. There are great many responsibilities there. The child that arrives at school unloved, unread to, uncared for, was unhealthy when it was born, is a child who is going to have a more difficult time learning. And the responsibility, of course, doesn't stop there.

So that is why we took those four problems and moved to a four-part strategy. My most difficult challenge is causing a Capitol that is accustomed to 9-second sound bites and 100-hour wars to think instead of a 9-year crusade, because this is not a program, announced on Thursday, that will produce results the next Wednesday or in another week, or even by the next Presidential election or the election of a United States Senator. It is an effort by the President to try to gather from everywhere in America the best ideas and the best thinking, the best way of going about things and say let's see if we can move in this direction.

The image that I am most comfortable with—at least I haven't thought of a better one—is going down to the District of Columbia's Union Station and thinking of four large trains leaving the station all at one time. These would be four trains headed toward the national goals, and they are all important, and they are all going at once: Track 1 is for today's students, better and more accountable schools; and within that category come 15 specific proposals that range from national standards in mathematics, for example, so that we can know whether a child growing up in Boston or Nashville is learning what he or she needs to know in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade in order to live and work in a world with Japanese children, European children, and other children, to giving parents a broader choice of schools for their children, to the summer institutes for teachers in the core curricula. There are a variety of other things.

Track 2—and this goes toward the notion that we were too slow and too timid in the 1980's—has to do with what we call a new gen-

eration of American schools. It will probably take the beginning of some of these schools for people to understand exactly what we are envisioning. But we are not talking about model schools or demonstration schools. We have plenty of those. What we are talking about is a break-the-mold process that will create the environment in which people can do all these things that we think we know how to do.

Al Shanker, the head of the American Federation of Teachers, wrote a letter when the new Saturn plant was being built in Tennessee, and said if we have a Saturn plant, why can't we have a Saturn school. There is a Saturn school now in St. Paul, MN. It is one type of the thinking that is done. What was different about the Saturn plant was they thought, very simply, what would it take to create one of the best cars in the world, and then they started from scratch to do that. Ted Sizer has done some very important work in that. James Comer has done some very important work in that. Henry Levin has. The Washington State 21st century schools have.

We believe encouraging that movement across the country would be one of the best things we could do to speed up the process of reform. It would also create a framework which would focus attention on schools, school by school, so that labor, business, Congress—all of us—could focus on all of these good ideas that we have in a place where they really work on schools.

Within this concept is the idea of America on-line, the germs of which are also in this committee. Members of Congress along with a great many people are talking about this. We don't have the patent on any of the ideas here. In fact, we hope to gather them. But America on-line is the idea of taking all of this wonderful information we have in America, the visual aids that we have, the National Geographic films, many of which could fit on one interactive videodisc; and even if all of them did, almost all schools in America would be unable to use them or fit them into the curriculum. It would be to take the best efforts and the thinking here in Washington and try to create a public utility of some sort so that eventually American schools or individuals could have better access to all these learning opportunities.

The Librarian of Congress is very interested in this. You and Senator Cochran talked to me about ideas like this at the time of my confirmation hearing. I think that is something the committee will want to be very interested in.

Track No. 3 is something we all know but we haven't thought of correctly, and maybe the President can help us think of it more correctly by going back to school himself. We have thought of adults as having received an education, except for those who are illiterate. For those who are illiterate we have literacy programs and opportunities to graduate from high school for others. But we have overlooked the fact that most of us need to go back to school for one reason or another.

My sister works for the telephone company in Oklahoma. Ever since she has been there, it seems like she has had to go back to school every 6 months or a year to keep her job. She didn't have to know about computers when she was hired. She now has to go back to school involving computers to keep her job.

It is true with most Americans. When I was president of the University of Tennessee, at commencement exercises the most frequent applause and the cheers from the audience were often "Way to go, Mom," because the number of students in our community colleges and universities are older and working and different than they were before.

Then, finally, Track 4, what we call the 91 percent factor—outside the schools, communities where learning can happen. Some may want to put an emphasis on Head Start and Government programs. The President has talked to Secretary Sullivan about organizing interagency initiatives in a way that they could be more useful to individual schools. Others will want to focus on the family and parental responsibilities. The President intends to challenge every American community to become an America 2000 community, which would do four things.

One, it would adopt the national goals for itself. Let's say this was Wichita, KA, or Newton, KA. Let's just pick that. A second requirement is that an America 2000 community would develop a strategy for reaching those goals. A third requirement is to develop its own report card for whether it is making progress toward the goals. The American achievement test as it is developed would be a voluntary utility available to Newton, KA, if it were going through that and wanted a reliable test, or it could use some other. The fourth requirement would be to take advantage of this opportunity to try to start from scratch and create one new school that would meet the needs of a specific number of children there to see what might be learned about that.

I believe there will be thousands of American communities which will accept that challenge, and the rest of us can then try to work within that framework to cause it to happen.

So that is, in summary, what the program is. If I were being more specific, I would probably take Track 1 and go through all of those items. I don't think I will do that for the moment, but, Bruno, please put on the ??? we provided other specifics.

Let's take the national goals which are agreed upon. Goal 3 of the national goals says that we will learn to proficient levels in English, history, science, geography, and math in America, and that is quite a statement to make in a country this big and diverse.

If I were to look at our own proposal and characterize it, I would probably say that the Track 1, better and more accountable schools which we would hope to effect, every one of the 110,000 public and private schools in America, is the most fundamental track because it affects all the schools, this generation of schools.

I would suspect the most divisive track will be the various proposals to try to increase the range of choices that American families have of the schools their children attend. I don't myself see why it should be divisive, and I suspect in 5 years it won't even be an issue. It will be taken for granted in this country. But to whatever extent it is divisive, it is one part, one important part of a broad range strategy. And I would hope we don't spend all of our time going through the various sides of that.

The most sophisticated, trickiest part of this proposal would be the national examination system, identifying world-class standards in the five core areas and then developing appropriate assessment

strategies for those systems. That won't be easy to do, and we will have to be very careful to avoid establishing a national curriculum and leave plenty of room for diversity in this country.

The most transforming part of the proposal, I would say, will be the new generation of American schools. This picks up a movement that is already out there in America and dignifying it, encouraging it, and speeding it along. I think hundreds of communities will want to be a part of this process, will find it very exciting and very useful. I think the America on-line idea is part of that new generation of American schools and also has enormous potential.

The most overlooked part of the President's proposal is his promise to challenge every American community to be an America 2000 community. That is Presidential leadership at its best, I think. That is something the President can do and no one else can do, except a Governor in his or her home State. And people will respond to that.

Finally, I would say there is a tie for the most under-rated, if not omitted, parts of today's education debate. One part of the equation is we are always talking about the children and never talking about ourselves, our adults—we are as badly in need of more education and more skills as our children are. Second, we have not given the importance to what goes on outside the school, just recognizing up front, however we may want to deal with it, that schools are for teaching and learning and they can't solve every problem. You can't just park your child at a school and expect the child to come out whole if the child wasn't whole or close to whole going in.

I have been delighted with the bipartisan response across the country to the President's proposal, with the response from education groups, with their willingness to be a part of it, with the willingness of people to understand that there is a difference between a strategy and a program, that a movement and a crusade take a while and there are many parts to it. The administration is eager to work with you and with members of this committee to fashion a piece of legislation that is the Federal part of helping the country move itself toward the goals.

Again, thank you for giving me a chance to come so quickly to the committee to talk about the President's strategy.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Senator THURMOND. Mr. Chairman, if you will excuse me, I have three other committees meeting, and I would ask unanimous consent that my opening statement appear in the record as part of the other opening statements.

The CHAIRMAN. So ordered.

Senator THURMOND. I will also have a few questions if the Secretary would be kind enough to answer for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. We will include all the statements in the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Thurmond follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR THURMOND

Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to be here this morning to consider the new education initiative announced last Thursday by President Bush—"American 2000". His plan for reform is exciting, inno-

vative, and far-reaching. As we heard last week, the framework for this new strategy involves four broad themes:

(1) Creating better and more accountable schools for today's students;

(2) Creating a New Generation of American Schools for tomorrow's students;

(3) Transforming America into a Nation of Students; and

(4) Making our communities places where learning will happen.

This is the framework. It is now up to us to work with the Administration, superintendents, teachers, board members, others in the education community, and all Americans to fill in the structure. As Secretary Alexander has alluded to in the past, this is like a train leaving the station—there is alot of room on board, and alot of room for give-and-take as we work to move this Nation forward.

The education we provide to our children and future generations of children is no doubt one of the most important gifts we can give to them. However, education is not just for our children and young people. It is a lifelong process. I am pleased that the third theme in the President's strategy advances this lifelong learning process. It would do so by strengthening adult literacy programs, creating business and community skills clinics, and enhancing job training opportunities.

Finally, the President has focused upon communities as "places where learning will happen". He has called on communities to adopt the six National education goals as their own; set a community strategy to meet them; and produce a report card to measure results. As elected representatives, we all know the value of active community involvement in bringing about change—change through the active involvement of parents, teachers, board members, and other citizens. Accordingly, I believe it is wise to stress this as a theme.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, it is a pleasure to be here and I wish to join you and the other members of the Committee in welcoming Secretary Alexander.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, and we will follow a 10-minute rule.

First of all, we welcome the reaffirmation of your commitment to send us legislation early. You mentioned last week, I think, that you were going to try and do it within a month. You mentioned that again today, to try and do it earlier if possible. We welcome that commitment. That puts us right toward the end of May, virtually. We have the Memorial weekend.

I talked with the majority leader, and even though we have reported out legislation now that is on the calendar, he wants to delay the consideration of that legislation until we have your recommendations. I am going to indicate to him that we expect that really toward the end of May. I hope we will be able to work those measures out so that if we are able to ge t substantial agreement on a number of those measures—there will be obviously some difference on many. But if we are able to get substantial agreement, we will be able to expedite the Senate consideration of that. We want to work with you on it.

Now, I mentioned just briefly in my opening statement the strong concern of many of us on this committee with the issue of

school readiness. We have passed a number of pieces of legislation dealing with early education last year. Members of this committee have been interested in nutrition baby care and comprehensive health for expectant mothers, a variety of different measures that are targeted on children and their wellness, the appropriate skills so that they can enter the early grades, even kindergarten and 1st grade, so that they can learn.

In the book that has been submitted of some 30-odd pages, there really isn't a reference to school readiness here. I would be interested if you would elaborate, to the extent that you can, on precisely what you are going to recommend to us on the issue of school readiness. Because we can have the best schools in the world, but if we don't have the child ready to learn when they enter, we don't be serving that child well.

What can you tell us about what the administration is going to do on the question of school readiness? I am leaving out, for the purposes of this discussion, modest expansion on Head Start. The President indicated in the 1988 campaign that he wanted every child that was eligible for Head Start to be enrolled in Head Start by 1992. We are going to miss that, even though we have on this committee unanimously made such recommendations as well. But what can you tell us about what the administration is going to do concerning school readiness?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me answer that a couple of ways. One way to talk about that is in terms of the significant Federal commitment that exists. Many of those programs came through your committee, and they have to do with Chapter 1 expenditures, Even Start expenditures, preschool grants for handicapped children, early childhood education, bilingual education. Much of the research of the Department, many of the activities which are already going on in the Department have to do with helping the children become ready for school.

Another way to approach that—and I think the most effective thing that the President can do—is to take the whole area of the other 91 percent; that is, to remind the American people that when they are worried about education, you don't just come up and blame the teacher, that you look at yourself and you look at what goes on in your own home, and that the community itself and the family and the parent itself has to take the responsibility for a child's early development.

Before we get to those families that aren't intact, I think we have to start with the families that are. And most are. And most of those aren't taking their responsibilities as seriously for their children's progress as they might, everything from a mother taking care of herself before the child is born, to a father reading to the child, to being home in the afternoon, to expecting a great deal of the child. So making that one of the four principal themes that the President would mount a crusade on is an important priority and elevates it and gives it some dignity.

Then comes the question of if the individual family doesn't do it, who else can help? The first people who can help are in the community, the aunts and uncles in the neighborhood, the people who are there watching the child, helping the child.

If those institutions are all broken down, then we have to think very differently perhaps about what kind of schools we have for the children. One of the ideas that we have is that this new generation of American schools would look at a group of 400 students and say what are their educational needs and how best can we provide that. They might have to come up with some radically different solutions, such as the solution in New York City where the children in the school are homeless. So in addition to providing a place for teaching and learning, someone has to provide a home for the children.

Almost all of those responses will come from the community or from people closest to the children or to the family, or from the State governments. I know that in our State, while I was Governor, we expanded the prenatal health care program from 20 or 30 counties to 95. Then I think we have the question of whether the Federal Government, through increasing funds, can help. Of course, there are some ways that it can, and there will be debates within the budget constraints about what that can be.

As you said, the President has said before that he hopes to expand Head Start, or to recommend that expansion for eligible children at age 4. There may be other things that can be done. But far and away, the most important things that can be done are for the President to call attention to it and challenge every community to deal with their responsibilities, and then to support it where appropriate through existing Federal legislation.

One other specific item in this is the President has asked Secretary Sullivan to take that whole area of Track 4 and to work with it in the Cabinet to see if we can organize our work better to deliver one-stop shopping services in the same sort of way that Bill Milliken, in Cities in the Schools does so successfully in many communities in America.

The CHAIRMAN. I think obviously the one-stop shopping makes sense, but we have deplorable rates on infant mortality. We have them in my own city of Boston. We are 7th or 8th in the country in terms of infant mortality, lack of prenatal care. About 30 percent of the children in many of the major schools aren't immunized. We have one major city, New Bedford, where about 50 percent aren't immunized. Just that $60, $60 to $70 is a sufficient burden on that family not to immunize.

We have had the report of the children that are hungry in this country 2 to 3 weeks ago, the growth of children who are hungry in our Nation. We are not meeting our responsibilities even in the Head Start program, and we have begun to try and deal with child care in the last Congress.

But these are major kinds of problems that I don't think the communities, many of these communities, are going to have the sufficient resources to be able to address. That is why just in looking at the issue of school readiness, I was interested in what the administration was or was not prepared to do in these particular areas.

Now, you mentioned Secretary Sullivan. He has been a valued friend of this committee. He has identified the importance of preventive medicine repeatedly. Have you talked with Secretary Sulli-

van about working your Department and his Department on this particular issue?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Yes, we have, Mr. Chairman. We visited about 2 weeks ago—at his invitation, as a matter of fact—to talk about this. We described generally Track 4 is the strategy and how the President wanted to elevate it in importance, make it a part of his strategy, and about talk about a number of things that were going on. So we have talked about that, as I have talked to Secretary Lynn Martin of the Department of Labor about Track 3.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you anticipate establishing some task force between the Departments to try and find ways that you can utilize both HHS and your own Department, particularly in the areas of school readiness? Do you anticipate that you might do that? I understand Secretary Cavazos had begun to do that in establishing it, and it seemed at least to me to make a good deal of sense. You might just take a look at it.

Secretary ALEXANDER. It does to me, too, Mr. Chairman. It would be a little presumptuous for me to do that, but the President called the Cabinet together last week and said he wanted it to be an education Cabinet. And we have talked, Secretary Sullivan and I, about Track 4. He would have the lead in that area. As the Federal Government is organized, those are more along his Department line. And on Track 3, Secretary Martin has been tremendously interested in all of the programs that have to do with adults continuing their education.

The CHAIRMAN. As I understand it, the President has asked for $100 million increase for Head Start, which would mean that we would wait until the year 2050 actually to cover all the eligible Head Start children.

Secretary ALEXANDER. It wouldn't take quite that long if we took the last couple of years' increase and calculated it right there. The President believes in Head Start. He made a significant appropriation recommendation for it last year. We are working within pretty severe budget limitations this year, and he hopes to move to that as rapidly as the budget will permit.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope when you have your recommendations that they will also indicate what you are going to do on the readiness issue in May.

Let me go to just a second area, and that is with regards to the choice issue and being accountable to public authority. As I understand, the total resources in a local community, what is provided in Chapter 1, what is provided in the State, that that would somehow be packaged—without getting into the specifics of how that might be packaged and sort of track the child and give the family some degree of choice. Is that roughly how you intend to develop that?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Mr. Chairman, again, without getting into the details, the college student aid programs and the Chapter 1 programs are probably the two most complex programs of the Department. Now, in Chapter 1 to some extent the money follows the child. Money is distributed according to financial need and educational deprivation, and there is a complex formula that tries to focus money in schools and communities where children are both poor and are educationally deprived.

What our philosophy would be would be to say that if a local school district or a State determined that it would like for a family to have a much broader choice of the schools that the children attend, we would like for the Chapter 1 money as much as possible to follow the child.

Now, we are going to be working on that in the next 2 to 3 weeks to try to find a way to do that that respects the great value that the Chapter 1 program has. I think I will stop with that.

The CHAIRMAN. My time is up on this, but we will come back to it.

Senator Hatch.

Senator HATCH. Thank you, Senator Kennedy.

I want to welcome you, Mr. Secretary. We are happy to have you before the committee.

I want to compliment our chairman, Senator Kennedy. As I understand it, he has asked Senator Mitchell to delay bringing up S.2 until the President's package is ready in May. I think that is a good step in the right direction. It certainly indicates a bipartisan approach to try and solve these problems. I want to see that continue up here because these problems are too important for us to get into partisan antics or politics here on the Hill. It is time we start all working together to try and help resolve these education problems, to the extent that the Federal Government can help to solve them.

We are happy to have you here, Mr. Secretary, and I want to congratulate you on the excellent strategy that you and the President have developed to reform the schools of this Nation. I think the upcoming year is going to be an exciting one as Congress and the administration work together to revise and implement the plan that you have proposed here.

I am especially pleased with the way the President's plan seeks to strengthen the States themselves. It reinforces their role as the government entity charged with the front-line responsibility to educate the children of our country. Several of the Nation's top educational leaders have endorsed the America 2000 proposals. For example, Bill Honig, the California education superintendent, stated, "I think it really has a chance of working. Educators I talked to are really happy about it, and we want to be part of it. It's positive. It's pragmatic. It's long-term." I like that.

The plan also recognizes and honors the prerogatives of local governments for funding and controlling education, which I think is critical. It recognizes the budget constraints of the States which you have spoken about here and the local governments, and, it encourages changes that acknowledge the limitations on citizens who are already making a major financial commitment to education. There is heavy emphasis on encouraging local initiative and benefiting from local talent.

This is a bold new plan, and it also involves business in an appropriate role by encouraging industry to invest heavily in research and development and to serve as a resource to schools and local governments in charge of education. I like that, and I think most people like that. I think they like to see business having a role because business can do an awful lot to help the schools, if they will. They have every reason to want to because, in the end, they are

going to be the beneficiaries of higher-skilled personnel and people who can help their businesses.

Your strategy seeks to involve the community and the family in this comprehensive strategy for the benefit of children. It does not attempt to replace the family or the community, but seeks to strengthen the role of both in improving the quality of education that our children receive.

Governor Roy Romer, one of several Governors who have praised this approach, stated, "This plan has some new and good ideas. We in America need to respond, everyone in every community, because if we don't improve our skill levels, we are not going to be competitive." That is, I think, a pretty impressive statement by that Governor.

The Federal Government continues to be an active partner in education, as we all know, by serving as the catalyst for change at the State and local levels. The federal government also helps by establishing various standards, showcasing effective models, providing needed start-up funds, and increasing flexibilities for those who are willing to be more accountable.

Teacher representatives have been pretty enthusiastic about what you have proposed here and for the President's announcement. Both Al Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers and Keith Geiger, the president of the National Education Association, have expressed their view that the America 2000 proposals are worthwhile and promising. Those are important people and important leaders in the field of education whom we need in order to try and bring about the reformation and changes that all of us know have to occur if we are going to stay competitive, and do the best for our children and our communities, and our businesses.

Now, Mr. Secretary, you and the President have designed a long-term solution to our problems in education. In my view, it is a practical solution, and I want to tell you that I am pleased with this plan. I for one pledge to work closely with you and our President as you seek to implement these ideas. And, of course, I have enjoyed hearing your testimony here today.

Now, I would just like to ask just a few short questions and hopefully cover them quickly.

First, how closely do you plan to work with State school officials, with State school leaders, governors, State school boards, and States school officers?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, Senator, very, very closely. Nothing that we outlined will amount to a hill of beans, unless we have accurately described a framework within which most communities and most States will feel comfortable working. That is the first thing we are trying to do. For example, the President talked about working with the governors, to establish a national examination system, because the governors are quite far down the road in doing that. We want to work closely with the State and local leaders who have the responsibilities for education.

Senator HATCH. Are there other programs currently in legislation which you think should be modified, other than those you have already identified thus far?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, I am sure there may be, Senator. In a month, this is all I could get done.

46-152 - 91 - 2

Senator HATCH. I think you did pretty well.

Secretary ALEXANDER. But what we will be attempting to do is to look at all of our Federal programs and the money we are spending, nearly $30 billion a year in activities, and try to relate it to this framework. The question we will try to ask always is what can we do to help America move itself toward the national education goal, so we may be coming back to you with other suggestions or ideas.

Senator HATCH. What kind of response have you received from other State and local leaders regarding this particular set of proposals that the President has put forth?

Secretary ALEXANDER. There are a range of responses. To be honest, some people do not understand the proposals. These proposals are a little different. They are not just a program. People who get used to a 9-second sound bite or a 100-hour war have a hard time switching gears to think about a 9-year crusade. They wonder what the results will be next month.

Generally speaking, the governors, the school superintendents, the citizens, the families are ready for some action. They would like to see something happen. They are glad to see the President come to the table and say I want to help. The President is very carefully not saying, look, I am going to do all of this, because he cannot and should not try. It is not his job, with 93 percent or so of the funding coming from State and local governments for elementary and secondary schools, and most of the money for colleges and universities coming from there, too.

There was an excellent article that I saw the other day in the the Boston Globe by a Democratic State Senator from Massachusetts that I thought caught the spirit of the strategy. It said there may be some questions here, but fundamentally it is welcome and the President may is onto something.

Senator HATCH. What kinds of changes do you propose with regard to children with disabilities, and how do they fit into your overall plan? We have a lot of children with disabilities in this country and an awful lot of programs. If you were to look at the line chart on various programs for persons with disabilities, it is absolutely astounding.

Secretary ALEXANDER. One of the department's major responsibilities, Senator, is to operate programs to try to serve Americans with disabilities. The President alluded to that in his address on Thursday, where he spoke of our commitment to Americans, without regard to background or disabilities.

One of the interesting parts of this strategy is that it permits so much focus on a school-by-school basis. I could foresee, for example, one of the new generation of American schools being a school that attempted primarily to serve students with disabilities and had an opportunity to start from scratch and break the mold and see if it could do that better than the ways that we do that now.

Senator HATCH. Thank you. My time is up, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate having you here. I appreciate the effort that you are putting into this and the effort that you are helping to bring about in education. We just hope you are very, very successful.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. We are joined by the Chairman of the Education Committee. Senator Pell has joined us, but I recognize Senator Kassebaum, who is the ranking minority member, and then we will go to Senator Pell.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I must say you really have gotten off to a running start in 1 month's time in office. I would like to join in commending the enthusiasm and the vitality and dedication that you and President Bush are giving to education. I think this is very positive.

I think it is it interesting and encouraging that a spokesman for the National Education Association pointed out that "Nation at Risk" was a report that caused us all great alarm and certainly got our attention, but was "doom and gloom." On the other hand, he noted that your program raises hope and it, in its own way, has grabbed the attention of the Nation in a very positive way. I think that out of this debate only positive things can come.

I would like to ask a couple of questions regarding parts of the plan. One is the standards. I wondered how you envisioned the standards for the 5 core subjects being developed and measured, and who will be determining these standards. Have you made that decision yet?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator.

No, I have not made that decision and I am not sure that is properly mine to make. Let me use an example. What we are talking about, when we talk about better, more accountable schools, new world standards, means simply how much does a child in Kansas need to know about math in order to live and work in the world the way it is today. The world has changed and we need to know more.

So, what is that, what does that mean? Well, in the case of mathematics, the math teachers of America for the last few years have been struggling with that question, have come to their own conclusion about it. They have completely rewritten what they would call world class standards in mathematics for American children.

They happen to be meeting here today and tomorrow in Washington with educators from all over the country, and what they are doing is exactly what the President has in mind. They are establishing these standards. They have gone back to local schools to say what do you think of these. They have tried to avoid any sort of homogenization of America. They have fairly clearly set out what a child ought to be able to know.

Now they are busy developing assessment strategies, ways to measure progress of whether a child is learning anything. We call it tests. The way that may happen is that the National Goals Panel, headed by Governor Roehmer, will evaluate this movement by the math teachers and others and might come to the conclusion that that took care of that, that there was no need for any agency of the Federal Government or any other agency to go through that process, because it already had been done in a way that seemed to get broad consensus within the education world and the lay world. We could move then on to reading and science and history and geography.

So, the first question is how to go about it, and the answer is that it is not for the Federal Government to do it. The Federal role is to cause someone else to do it, someone else out in this big diverse country, The Goals Panel would take the responsibility for encouraging that to happen.

Senator KASSEBAUM. So, do you appoint the Goals Panel?

Secretary ALEXANDER. The Goals Panel is now composed of six governors and the four administration officials and four members of the Congress.

Senator KASSEBAUM. That is right.

Secretary ALEXANDER. They are working with some of the most distinguished educators in America on this, people ranging from Ernest Boyer, to Lauren Resnick, to Mark Musik, they have been holding hearings to gather opinions from professional educators and others across America.

Senator KASSEBAUM. You indicated that the President's challenge to the communities was perhaps the most overlooked part of the plan. What would your advice be to a community that wanted to get started?

Secretary ALEXANDER. I would invite the President to come to the community.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Well, I will call him this afternoon. [Laughter.]

Secretary ALEXANDER. Or Mrs. Bush or the Vice President or any of the Cabinet members.

Senator KASSEBAUM. The Senator from Kansas.

Secretary ALEXANDER. The Senator from Kansas would be a great place to start. What I would envision is that, at such an occasion, the community would show up, not just the educators, but the community leaders and others who wanted to come. The President or whomever would issue the challenge to adopt the six education goals for yourselves in your own way, because we know that you do not take anybody else's goals. And next develop a strategy. Third develop your own report card. Finally, try to create one of the new break-the-mold schools if you are able to do that, we have some help for you in each of those areas.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Do you find it a concern that in, say, six of our major cities, there is difficulty in getting a school superintendent?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Yes, it is of great concern. I mean one of the most difficult jobs in America today is superintendent of any school district, and particularly a large urban district.

I was talking to the superintendent of such a school district just the other day. He starts his day at 6:00 every morning and goes until about 8:00 at night. He says the district is just like a baby. It requires constant tending, and anything can go wrong at any moment.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I ask that, because we talk about challenging communities to be places where learning can happen. That is terribly important, but I know of communities in my own State where there has been constant friction between superintendents and school board and the public, to the detriment, really, of the students. This seems to be a growing concern, in both large urban areas and the smaller communities.

I am a strong believer in active school boards, but they seem to be unable to develop a working partnership far, far more frequently than used to be the case.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, the word "accountable" is up there at the top of Track 1. Someone has got to be on the flagpole, someone or some small group has got to be accountable for the quality of the management of the school, and it is very difficult, as you say, if you have a superintendent and a school board that are at odds over that. It is like one ought to fire the other or somebody ought to fire the school board and they get back to having somebody in charge. That makes it very confusing for the teachers.

Senator KASSEBAUM. That is very true.

Let me ask about the recommendation that $200 million be provided for the education certificate program, which is basically vouchers, I guess you would say. How do you envision the $200 million being used?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, this is money for school districts or States that would like to try to give families a broader choice of the schools their children attend, including nonpublic schools, and what we would devise is a system, if these should be approved by Congress, where States and school districts who wish to do that would submit applications and receive money that would help them carry out such a program.

Senator KASSEBAUM. My time is about up, but if I could just finish this question, many districts in many States do that now. In Kansas, we have not necessarily made a big issue of choice, but it can be done. I think that the difference here is that we are putting in Federal money. While it is just a pilot project, I must say, Mr. Secretary, I have some concerns. One of the real costs is transportation, and if we start to put Federal money into this, it seems to me it is going to grow and grow and grow as a program that can consume an enormous amount of Federal dollars. I just think personally we have to be careful how that money is targeted.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator. You had mentioned to me before the concern about transportation, we do not want to get any further into the school bus business, which we now are, of course, with school desegregation and transportation.

I think of the Memphis example. Memphis has had optional schools of choice for many years in a large urban school district when that choice system was finally agreed to, it actually reduced by about $2 million a year the transportation costs within the district, because the parents, many of whom are minority parents, poor parents, chose schools closer to home. There was less busing and that money went to pay for academic programs, all of it agreed to by the Federal court and the NAACP locally. So, a system of choice in some cases might actually reduce transportation costs, which could be used for other academic programs.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Pell?

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate you in calling this hearing.

Mr. Secretary, we look forward to examining in greater detail the proposals advanced by the President. It is difficult to comment on them until we see the specifics a little more. As I see it, there

are three general areas that particularly have the focus of my attention, testing, the school year, the question of choice, and among the proposals set forth, I am particularly interested in the thought of national testing.

As you may be aware, I have long advocated this, that one of the relatively few times I have been booed is when I suggested this the first time, about 6 or 8 years ago, to a group of teachers. So, it is not necessarily a popular proposal, but I think it is a very good one and, boos or no boos, we ought to move ahead on it.

I am also pleased with the concern that you have that too little time is spent in school. I think it is a disgrace, when you realize that our school year, the regular year is a vacation, and the other half we go to school. People do not think of it in those terms. We have 180 days a year of school, and just being at random—I always carry it around in my notebook here—Sweden is 200, the Soviet Union 210, Canada 200, Thailand 220, South Korea 220, Italy 213, Japan 243, and we have 180. So, I think it is a very good idea, indeed, to focus on that.

I notice in the analysis of the material you are sending us you discuss the Commission on Time, Study, Learning and Teaching, and that you will be focusing to a certain degree on that, and I hope you look positively on S. 64, the legislation to establish a national commission.

I think you will approve of my idea, because I just talk about the length of the school year, which is half a vacation. If you talk about how long the time spent in the classroom is, too, I think I have probably been negligent in not focusing as much on that as on the length of the school year.

I do know that, when it comes to choice, that is a red-hot issue, and I look forward to going over that with you. As you know, there are pros and cons, and it will stir a good deal of controversy and debate, but maybe out of it will come some solution or compromise, I am not sure as of now.

But we welcome you here. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Mr. Chairman, could I just acknowledge those comments, if I may, in a couple of ways?

The CHAIRMAN. Please.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator Pell, for mentioning those three issues. You have been way out front on two, and arguably three of them for a long time. We would very much like to work with you and the Chairman and other members of the committee on the idea of looking at "Time, Study, Learning and Teaching."

The world has changed and our school organization has not kept up with the way the world has changed. At one time, the schools in America were open 3 months a year, and they were all private or nonpublic. We ought to take a hard look at "Time, Study, Learning and Teaching." I would welcome the chance to talk with you about that and to pick up on your leadership in the area and produce a thorough look at all of this. Look school districts would have to make the final decisions, of course, but at least we could raise some questions.

There is a Japanese high school in Sweetwater, TN, just down the road from the public high school from which I graduated. The public high school is a very good public high school. I checked to see what they teach and what they do. They learn in 3 years in the Japanese high school in Sweetwater, TN, what they learn in 4 years at Maryville High School. They go 240 days a year, they go on Saturday, and do other things of this nature.

On the question of testing. Again, you were out front on that issue. It will take a while to establish a national assessment, a national examination system. We think it should be voluntary. We look forward to discussing that with you. We would like to move fairly rapidly to keep NAEP, the Nation's report card, active and alive and well, with State-by-State comparisons, and to make it available for local school districts to use, especially in the interim. These are very important questions and we would welcome the chance to work with you on them.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, indeed. I would add that, when it comes to choice, we obviously do not want to hurt the public school system, we all agree on that, and when it comes—I have two questions. What would be your definition of a public school, who would be included in that district?

Secretary ALEXANDER. I am working on a definition of a public school. I think it should change. I think today a public school is a school run by a school district. There is no reason that is the only sort of public school. A public school ought to be a school with a public purpose, with some goals broadly shared by the public, accountable to some public agency. Perhaps we ought to think about again what is the purpose of a public school and what ought one to be.

It may very well be that if there were an independent school which began to take large numbers or significant numbers of children who brought with them government funds, they would then take on some sort of public responsibility and have to be accountable to a public agency in the way they are not now. They would be what we might soon come to call a public school.

I am thinking that if parents are allowed to choose a broader variety of schools, some of which are now independent, those schools may take on a public character. We may come to think of them as public schools. The result is that we may have more, rather than fewer public schools in the long run, if that were to happen.

Senator PELL. I wonder if one of the problems is not that we have 16,000 sovereign school districts, each with complete liberty to set its own curriculum, and that, as time goes on, competition gets greater and the world gets more complicated, there is going to have to be less sovereignty established through each one of these school committees, as there are more common denominators of a certain amount of math, a certain amount of history, and a certain amount of this or that. I am just curious as to what your reaction would be. As you know, other nations do not have sovereign school districts the way we do.

Secretary ALEXANDER. You have focused on what will probably be the most interesting and most sophisticated part of the discussion about whether, in America, we can have a national examination system in the five core subjects. If this were Belgium or Hol-

land or England, small countries more homogeneous, it would not be such a problem.

But this country has so uniquely drawn people from so many different backgrounds and celebrates that, is so used to local control, that the President's opinion is that we want to avoid a national curriculum or a single national examination. He does agree with the thrust of what you said about the need for national standards in the five core curriculum, and that we do need that as a country, if our children are going to grow up able to compete. We need to know what they need ot know about mathematics, for example.

Senator PELL. Picking up your point about voluntary tests, which is so valid, because as long as we have these sovereign school districts and have to work with them, the problem is to nudge them along in the right direction, and by having a voluntary test this way, the school district will want some of its children to be able to pass the test, and that, in turn, will have an effect on the curriculum.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Hopefully, it would, Senator, or they might rare up and say "we don't want to have anything to do with an American achievement test" or something like that. Then I would think there would be a certain number of people in the community who would say, well, if you are afraid of that test, then at least produce one to the same high standards, so we can know whether our children are learning anything or not. At least it will provoke that discussion.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, Senator Pell has been working very hard on the Higher Education Act. I know you have indicated where you are going to come out in making recommendations in May on the President's proposal. But we will be most interested in getting the administration's proposals and recommendations with regard to the Higher Education Act as well. Can you give us any idea? You are going to be very busy for the next month with these other matters, but if there is anything that you can——

Secretary ALEXANDER. Let me confer with my brain trust here. [Pause.]

Mr. Chairman, a letter describing the proposal will be out next week and the bill within a month. So that would put our proposals from the President regarding the outline of his strategy on the higher education proposals before you within the month.

The CHAIRMAN. Good.

Secretary ALEXANDER. That is our goal. We will have them here.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Cochran.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

When the hearing began, Mr. Secretary, one of the first questions you were asked is about the preparation of children for schools. I recall at the White House the other day, as we had our meeting with the President where he made public the America 2000 education strategy, there were some guests who were invited to join us all there, one of whom was a young woman from St. Louis, MO, I think, who was described as being a person who was taking advantage of a new program there called Parents As Teachers, which was designed to acquaint parents with things they could

do to help ensure that their children were ready to learn when they became school age. She had a 1-year-old child, as I remember, and was cited as an example of one of the things that could be done in communities all around the country.

I point that out because we are now seeing here in the Senate some legislation introduced by Senator Kit Bond of Missouri to provide some funds for grants for applicants to establish programs like this around the country. Some are already being established without Federal funds.

I know in Jackson, MS, for example, we have a Parents As Teachers program that is becoming very popular. More and more people are learning about it and how it can help them equip their own children with the supervision, motivation, and understanding that would better serve their needs as a student when they begin school.

I don't know whether the administration has taken a position on that legislation or not, but I do think that it is a good example of an innovative effort that is being already made without the benefit of the Federal Government's advice and counsel.

To me, that is one thing that this strategy tries to do, and that is to attract attention to programs that are working, that are benefiting our education effort somewhere in the United States or in some State. And this is one of the broader purposes of the President's crusade or proposal, as I understand it.

That brings me to ask a question, about the break-the-mold schools, as you describe them, the new American schools. Are these going to be in every instance schools designed by the Department of Education or through regulations for approving applications, have to meet certain Federal standards of curriculum or uniqueness? What is your approach to trying to implement a new American schools program?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator. On the Parents As Teachers program, thank you for the comment on that. Senator Bond has called me and talked to me on a couple of occasions about that. I am looking forward to learning more about it from him. It is obviously an excellent problem. The only question probably would be whether it ought to be State initiative or it ought to be Federal. I look forward to learning more.

The answer about the new American school is that we hope these break-the-mold schools will be as free of regulation as possible. Our objectives—we being the President and the Department—are that the only goals for the schools would be that they aim toward achieving the national education goals, those six goals ranging from readiness to learn toward drug-free and no violence, with proficiency in the core curriculum. They must aim toward achieving those goals. They should be operated at about the same cost that conventional schools are operated today.

We want to see what will happen when a community identifies a certain number of children and says this is our goal. What do these children need in order to reach that goal?

We would encourage the Congress, as it considers our proposal, not to put a lot of strings on $1 million grants for the 535 of the first one of these. We should let American ingenuity flourish. An example of that might be in Senator Wellstone's home State where

the Saturn school exists which the President mentioned. That grew out of a letter that Al Shanker the president of the American Federation of Teachers wrote a few years ago. He heard about the General Motors Saturn plant which was started just the same way. What would it take to create a car that will compete with the Japanese car, and then start from scratch and build it? So Shanker said, if we can have a Saturn plant, why not a Saturn school? And somebody in St. Paul, heard about it, got busy organizing one, and they had one.

It is not perfect, but what they thought about was how do we do things differently. And we hope the R&D teams that the business community will be mobilizing, the university people and all sorts of people are involved in, will be available to the Saturn school people at the outset, not to create the school for them, but to help them develop strategies about content, about curriculum, about ways of arranging the building that is there or any new building to fit the circumstances. So the fewer regulations on these schools, at least to begin with, the more we believe America's creative genius will help us create a wave of new American schools.

Senator COCHRAN. One of the concerns that has been expressed to me from people in my State is whether or not there is anything in this crusade that is going to reassure those States or districts that serve large numbers of economically disadvantaged students, that there will be some assistance for them in helping to improve their schools. Our experience has been around the country and around our State that those schools which are serving large numbers of economically disadvantaged students have the hardest time improving their educational programs.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Senator, the entire strategy is aimed toward those students especially. First, it is important to go back to what a strategy is. When I became Governor of Tennessee, someone gave me a book George Reedy Lyndon Johnson's press secretary wrote. In it he defines the Presidency. He says what a President ought to do is three things: number one, see the most urgent needs; number two, develop a strategy to meet those needs; and, number three, persuade at least half the people he is right. He was quite serious about that. So what I think the education strategy involves is seeing the need, developing a strategy, and then persuading half the people he is right.

Reedy didn't say anything about all the Federal programs or the State programs or the local programs from government that might come in on behalf of that. Of course, they came and they will in this case. But the first thing is to persuade people, as the President has, that:

No. 1, at-risk children need better and more accountable schools; they can learn too.

No. 2, we can take the new generation of American schools, and I would hope—if I were involved in one, I would pick the toughest place I could go where the children from the hardest circumstances are, and see if I could meet their needs in a better way than we are doing today.

And, number three, the idea of parents going back to school, the more the parents go back to school, the more they will value education. That is the surest way for children to learn.

Then, fourth, the President is trying to say to America about the 91 percent factor, so much depends on what happens outside the school.

This entire strategy is aimed at especially disadvantaged children because that is where our problem in America is more than in any other place. In Japan, everyone gets educated to a certain level. In America, we have plenty of people who get educated to a certain level. We will still continue to have our share of the Nobel Prize winners. But we are leaving a lot of people out, and we need to work harder on that.

Senator COCHRAN. Well, I am excited about the prospects for seeing some real meaningful reforms, and I think that is what we ought to try to emphasize in terms of what this strategy and what this crusade is all about. It is about reform and making what we have better. I am a little disturbed by those who seem to dismiss it as not providing any more funds for the things we are already doing in a mediocre way, or with mediocre results. And that to me misses the whole point of this—and I have heard some comments about that—and because there is no authority for more than 800 and some-odd million dollars of new funding that therefore this proposal is not a sound effort at reform. That misses the point, to me.

But I want to congratulate you. It is a tough area, and I think I heard you say the other day when you were talking to the press after the President's proposal was unveiled, everybody is an expert in education, and it is pretty tough to sell one view or one crusade as being the best approach. But I think you are on the right track, and I wish you well and congratulate you.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Wellstone.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am not sure what has been covered, and so maybe I will go with some separate questions here. I was just following this discussion with Senator Cochran and Secretary Alexander. I look at these goals, and I think they are important. I guess I just would like to state—and we had this discussion several times over now that I am not—when it comes to the concerns and circumstances of children on the bottom, which I think Senator Cochran's question was such an important one, I am still concerned that in the absence of, for example, full funding for Head Start and many of the things that we need to do for children before they even reach the age of 8, I don't really see the commitment of resources. And it does concern me that the testing can become a technical fix where we have the tests but we don't dramatically transform the concerns and circumstances of the lives of the children, whether it start with prenatal care and then at birth or whether it be Head Start or whether it be earlier years. We don't dramatically change the imbalance of resources between the wealth of some communities which can put a lot into schools and the lack of wealth of others that can't—in which case I am still not convinced that this isn't, again, kind of a technical fix that looks good but doesn't really get at the magnitude of what we are faced with right now with our children in education.

I would certainly be all for some of these proposals, but I sure wouldn't want to see them as a substitute for full funding for Head Start and programs like that which have been an unambiguous success.

Let me ask a couple of questions, if I can, about choice because that is really the centerpiece of some of your program, and I think it is an important concept. The problem—and we had this discussion too where I know at one point in time I said I feared that choice would become like a stone soup philosophy, where we kind of laughed about that together——

Secretary ALEXANDER. I liked your analogy. I thought that was a good point.

Senator WELLSTONE. I know you liked it, but you won't agree with me beyond the analogy. [Laughter.] You boil it, but you don't get any new flavor or new nutrients.

The concept is exciting, but choice itself doesn't tell us what you really mean. And I would like to explore with you just a number of different kind of issues about choice. Choice can be good; choice can be bad. Some people worry that it is a retreat from equality. Some people wonder what direction it is going to go in.

Could you explain in some detail exactly how the administration is defining choice? Let me just go on and raise a couple of other questions, if I can. One would be: Is this going to include private schools as well as public schools? And if private schools are included, what sort of rules or regulations or standards are there going to be to assure accountability?

I am going to get a stream of questions out that way, because you kind of like to cover them all in more inclusive answers. As a teacher, I appreciate that.

If private schools are included in the choice programs—and as I understand it, they are—then where would the money come from to enable students to have the real choice to go to those private schools? Because I don't see a lot of additional money in the administration's proposal. And if there isn't a lot of additional money, then how do we make sure that it will be well-off families who, with a little additional money, can send their children to private schools? For example, to go back to the Senator from Mississippi's question, children from lower-income families are going to be shut out, whatever you call it—in fact, they have no real choice.

Let me just start out with that set of questions because I need to understand, you know, whether or not this is going to lessen inequality and increase equality of opportunity, which is certainly what I know you believe in, Secretary Alexander, or whether or not it might not be a step forward but a step sideways or even a step backward.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator, for all those points and for presenting them. Hopefully the President's strategy is a way of avoiding the stone soup that might be presented to a child who might, if given a choice, have no real choice because the schools weren't that good. Hopefully the various tracks of better and more accountable schools, innovative schools, parents going back to school, and a focus on what goes on outside the school would help turn that stone soup into a rich stew of some sort.

Our goal would be to help disadvantaged children have more of the same kind of opportunities that middle-income and upper-income children have in the choice of their schools. While I will try to answer your questions very briefly, I would like to take just a moment before I start to say I come at this from a totally different direction. Without waving the flag, I do think a fundamental part of this country is that we have choices. We are a complex country, and we like choices. We are not a country where we take very well being told what to do, where to live, how to work, what kind of car to buy. Other societies have tried that. We don't like those societies.

I believe that the idea that we have just fallen into quite accidentally, partly out of laziness, of telling parents where they had to send their children to school is an anachronism and is alien to this way of life. You know, we didn't start out that way in America, and how we got into it I am not sure. So I really think the burden in America ought to be on those who want to deny choice to people rather than who want to propose it.

However, our idea would be simply to say that we would like for the Federal money to follow the child as much as possible, within whatever the local school district decides it wants to do about choice of schools, and within whatever the U.S. Supreme Court says is constitutional and follows the First Amendment. There are some First Amendment obstacles, according to U.S. Supreme Court cases, that limit what public money may be spent in, for example, parochial schools.

But so far as we are concerned, we would respect the local decision, and we would respect the U.S. Supreme Court. But we are for giving families the broadest possible choice of schools.

Now, what about private schools? Well, about 90 percent of children in America go to schools run by school districts which we call public schools. What if some of those children started going to independent schools, carrying Government money with them? I am sure that the United States Congress or the Minnesota General Assembly Legislature would say, if you are going to take public money, you are going to have to be accountable in some respects. We are going to put some rules on you. If you want the children with the Government money, we want you to follow some Government rules.

At that point, the independent school might say no, thanks, and we would be right where we are today—people with money would have a lot of choices, and people without it would have fewer. Or those schools would say we would be delighted to live under the rules, and we would be glad to take the students who bring with them a sort of public scholarship to help them pay for the school.

Those rules and regulations would have to be written by local school districts, by States, and by the United States Congress as it appropriated the money. I am not yet ready to say what I think are those rules and regulations or to try to redefine a public school. I would like to introduce that notion. I would like for us to think about it. What I really think will happen is that over the next 5 years this will all cease to become an issue. A great many of the schools that are now independent, even parochial, even some new kinds of schools, will accept children who bring with them sort of a

public scholarship, and they will then become what we think of also as public schools. So there may be more "public" schools than independent.

And the whole idea is a lot less frightening if people will think about what Congress has done since World War II with parents. When the GI's came back from World War II, they could spend their money at Notre Dame as well as at Purdue. When the Pell grants started in 1972, a college student could spend that everywhere. Now, the main difference is you don't have to go to college. You can be kicked out. But there are analogies, and despite the billions of dollars we spend giving people choice of colleges and universities, we have what most people think is the best, most competitive higher education system in the world. And still 10 million out of 13 million students go to public universities.

So that would be my response.

Senator WELLSTONE. I only have 2 minutes, as it turns out——

Secretary ALEXANDER. I am afraid I took a lot of it.

Senator WELLSTONE. No, it was—well, you did. You took a lot of the time. [Laughter.]

I do not know how to now pursue some of the detailed questions, and we can revisit this. Let me just share the concern I have. I mean, I am not going to not stand up here or sit down here and argue against the idea of choice as a concept. It is when we move from the conceptual level to the detail level that I have a lot of questions. And when I see some of the language here the administration poses the choice, include "all schools that serve the public and are accountable to public authority," I am trying to find out what that means.

When we include private schools into this equation and we are talking about private schools being accountable to public authority or what are the rules, I am trying to find out what that means. I think there has to be more specificity to this, and I have a great concern, one more time, about levels of funding, because I think this whole thing breaks down.

If students can have the choice to go from a public school to a private school, then what I would be interested in is how much money will be available for each of those students. Quite frankly, given what I see right now with budgets, I fear that there will not be very much money available, in which case those very students that I believe you want to respond to, that you say this proposal will respond to, are going to be left out. They are not going to be able to go to those private schools.

So, in the absence of knowing what the funding level is and whether or not, in fact, children from all social economic classes—Mr. Chairman, if I could have just 10 more seconds on this—are going to really have the same opportunity, really have the same choice, I am very wary of this. I think this could very well widen inequalities. I think this could really hurt public education.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, we obviously hope the opposite——

Senator WELLSTONE. I understand.

Secretary ALEXANDER. —and believe that the experience with colleges and universities has demonstrated that it is true. If you want to go to Stanford, instead of Berkeley, you pay a lot more.

But a lot of people concluded that Berkeley is as good and they do not worry about not having the choice of going to Stanford.

Senator WELLSTONE. I am not talking about a Stanford versus Berkeley choice.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, we believe the bottom line would be more choices for many of the students and a competitive environment that would increase the quality of the schools for all of the students. That would be our hope.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, I listened very carefully to your eloquence about choice, and I am wondering, are you pro-choice now?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Which committee is this, Senator? [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coats.

Senator COATS. I had the same type of questions when we were talking about funding for Head Start and all kinds of health programs. I thought I might be in the wrong committee room, when we were talking to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, rather than the Secretary of Education.

Mr. Secretary, I want to follow up on the choice issue, because I think that is an important one.

I would hope that, as we have seen innovations take place in your State and other States across the country, essentially by the initiative of State and local jurisdictions, that we would not, through federal legislation inhibit that innovation which is taking place at the State and local level. I am concerned that, as we increase the Federal role here—and I think many of the ways that you have suggested increasing it are important and ought to be pursued—but as we increase it, we must resist the almost inevitability of prescribing a single standard which will then result in potentially a lowest common denominator approach to education, because a lot of the programs on which I think your proposals are based flow from some very innovative things that have taken place in the States and in local jurisdictions.

Parents As Teachers started out as a State program in Missouri, school-based management, even the choice proposals and a whole number of other programs that I think are beginning to show some results were not written in Washington. They probably could not have been written in Washington, because someone would have concluded that you cannot apply this across the board, given the diversity that exists in our Nation.

I am really concerned, as worthy as these goals are, that they may get swallowed up by the bureaucracy and swallowed up by a system which will stifle that innovation. I know you have those same concerns, and I hope that, as we work through this, we can protect against that.

The main point that I would like to get to is to continue the discussion on choice. I talk to teachers and educators and read about the problems in education, particularly the problems that exist among what my colleague Senator Wellstone described as the lower part of either the income scale or the education scale.

The feedback I get out of that, is that a lot of those problems do not really have to deal with education per se, that the ability of the

teacher and the school to transmit education to those young people is greatly inhibited by the values that those young people bring into the school, and that much of the day is spent dealing with problems that really have nothing to do with educating the student. They are values problems, they are behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and on and on.

As we talk about the role of the parent in education, I think many are saying, until we can find ways to address those fundamental underlying values problems that exist among a lot of our youth, particularly our disadvantaged youth, we are really not going to make any kind of quality strides in educating those youth.

Now, I think we all agree that the family is the best transmitter of those values. Yet, we also have to acknowledge that, in many cases, particularly in that class of students that the family has just disintegrated, the family does not exist and those values cannot be transmitted, and so many then are looking to the school to make up for that. Then we often run into that clash between the First Amendment and the role of government, which I think may be impossible to overcome.

That is a long premise to lead me to choice, and it makes me wonder if the partial solution, acknowledging that the family is not there to transmit those values, is not to provide that student or what is left of that family with the means to choose or to direct that young person into an educational system where those values can be transmitted, which then is an advocacy for parochial or some type of church-based school where those values can be transmitted within the educational process. The Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church and others have done this very successfuily for many, many years, so we have the model.

So, my question is do you agree with what I am saying? How much can we use choice to help address a very fundamental problem that, is my opinion, is inhibiting the ability to provide needed education to many of our young people? What is the role of government, can we use choice to accomplish that? Would the standards and rules imposed by the Federal Government, because we are using Federal money, undermine the ability of the parochial schools, independent schools, and religious schools to continue to transmit those values?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Senator, I believe that the kind of discussion you just went through is the discussion that we would like to evoke in every community in America. One of the difficulties with education is it is not something you do to people, people have to come to these conclusions for themselves.

As I think, for example, about one of the new generation of American schools, one of the great advantages of it would be that if a community sat down in some community in Indiana, for example, and said, all right, let us take these 400 children, let us take 400 mostly at-risk children—and we are not talking about some magnet school for the bright math students or something, we are just talking about kids that need ot go to school—let us identify what they need and let us see if we can provide a school for them at about the same cost that we are providing.

I think that would be an education process for the whole community. I suspect that what the community will discover, to its surprise—because most grownups do not understand how people live today, even their own, including me, probably—that one new school has many challenges to face in terms of all of the goals of teaching and learning. They then will begin to understand that this great range of needs that are properly outside the school raises a great big questionmark in that community for these children about who is going to do that.

You may have different views which you cannot walk away from, unless you are just hard-hearted. Somebody may say, the government ought to wrap them all up and take them over here and take care of them. Somebody else may say, we all ought to do that in our own families and adopt them or something has to be done for children who are unread to, have nowhere to go in the afternoon, who need extra help, and many of these things have to do with things that school simply cannot do.

Hopefully, an environment of choice would permit schools to develop that would deal with that. One way a school might do that is to say to parents, if you choose this school, you have to make a contract, you parents do, you may have to agree with us from the time your child is born about some responsibilities you have about reading, about caring for yourself and caring for the children. If you do not want to exercise your responsibility, we have got other people who want to and who want to go to this school.

I think an environment of choice presents a lot of opportunities for getting communities into the question of who is going to deal with all of these other needs, which is Track 4 of the President's strategy.

Senator COATS. But, just lengthening the school day or requiring study in five core subjects, you would agree, does not necessarily address some very critical elements of ultimate success in the educational process?

Secretary ALEXANDER. I would agree, and Senator Wellstone might emphasize one form of response to that and you might emphasize another. But you would both be on the right track, so far as we are concerned, because it is the 91 percent factor that is outside the school. We cannot ignore it any longer.

Senator COATS. I will never forget the testimony before a Children, Youth and Families hearing in Macon, GA, by humble rural black minister who was invited to testify before the committee, because he had spent a lot of time dealing with the problems of youth. He said "What you people in government just cannot seem to grasp is that the problems that exist today in our young people are not just body and mind or things that you in government can deal with, they are soul and spirit and government cannot and is not equipped and should not deal with those, and until you can find a way to integrate that process or, at least, deal with both sides or the holistic side of the person, you are going to continue to struggle and beat your head against the wall, thinking if you can just meet the material needs, if you can just keep the kids in school longer, if you can just give them more money and help them out of their poverty. But the problems I deal with that keep kids from learning anything are all of these other things that I listed. Gov-

ernment cannot deal with that so quit trying to prescribe the solution to it through government."

Secretary ALEXANDER. The President is referring to that generally as the 91 percent factor, the idea that between the time you are born and the time you are 18, you spend 9 percent of your time in the classroom and the rest outside of it. It is that outside part where the world has changed and we have to know more and be able to do more. That is such a terrible adjustment.

The second thing is our schools have not changed. They are last century schools, not next century schools. The third is all of the things you have just described have deteriorated. Many of the institutions, including the family and the neighborhood, that have helped children grow up and support their progress so that they could learn, especially in urban districts, superintendents see an enormous deterioration there. That is outside of government, to a great extent.

Senator COATS. My time is expired. I appreciate your comments.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Durenberger?

Senator DURENBERGER. Mr. Chairman, if the audience wonders why we get shorter down here at the end of the table. It is because the more senior you are, the more cushions they have under the Senators. [Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and I want to thank the Secretary for the education he has provided us here this morning. I find the questions of my colleagues very educational, and I compliment the Secretary on the quality of his responses. I suspect if we came in here once a month, we would all get better at this subject, and so it is a wonderful opportunity for me to be here to participate in this process.

I would like to begin with framing why we are here. My recollection is the Federal Government did not get heavily into elementary and secondary education until about 25 or 30 years ago, and that our principal reason for doing so was to ensure access.

We looked out there where they traditionally did education and we found a lot of people in rural areas, people who were poor, people with disabilities, people who were racial minorities, who were not being accessed by systems that were coming under financial pressures, and so we responded to that with a variety of programs aimed at access.

Now, what we are up to, I think, is a combination of continuing the Federal role and responsibility for access, and adding a focus on quality. In the dealing with the issue of quality, we have to make some decisions, about the role of public versus private. If I can talk a little bit about the Minnesota model, and about the role that individual people play in this process.

In the Finance Committee, I think for about 9 years now, we have been debating tuition tax credits. Ted Bell testified before the committee and I asked him about choice in education. He could not explain it 9 years ago, and so I used a little diagram, which I continue to use: If this is your neighborhood—that the memo pad is your neighborhood—and that little dot in the middle is your elementary school, the only choice you have is your neighborhood and that one school. That is public education today, in general, around this country.

So, if we talk about poor people, if we talk about racial minorities, if we talk about people without choices—people who generally don't even have a choice of neighborhood, you know, in most of our cities—they don't have any choices at all. This is the existing system. That is your school, if you live in that neighborhood, assuming you even had a choice of the neighborhood.

So, it strikes me that the first way to approach the whole issue of choices is this: Today, you have a nonchoice system for too many Americans. You do not even have a choice where you get to live, where you get to raise your kids.

So, the process that I think we are beginning to engage in, both on the 9 percent and on the 91 percent, is dealing with the problem that too many Americans are deprived of choice to begin with. That we ought to introduce some choice into that system, and then expand the process to introduce choices into education.

As you know, Mr. Secretary, Minnesota started about 9 or 10 years ago to do that. We now have 28,000 Minnesota students at the secondary level participating in half a dozen interdistrict choice programs, all of them offered by the public schools. We have 6,000 high school juniors and seniors who are taking college courses, for example. That was only the beginning. That was just to try to explain what choice is. It was an effort to secure some part of your education outside of the box in your neighborhood.

Now, as a result of that, literally dozens of Minnesota school districts are experimenting with what choice means to them. The first reaction is that everybody will leave one school and go to some place where there is a better hockey team in Minnesota, or a better baseball team or something like that. But that is not the thesis of choice.

The thesis of choice is to give people an opportunity to leave, who probably do not want to leave. You do not want to have to go across-town to get your education, you would just as soon get it close to home. But the folks who are responsible for this part of the system need the fact that the students can leave, to give them the incentives or the opportunities to change that system.

So, now we have progressed in Minnesota and are working on something that they first called charter schools. A senior from Starbuck, MN, which has a senior class of about 25 students, on the steps of the Capitol the other day asked me, Mr. Chairman, what do you think about outcome schools. At first, I did not know what an outcome school was, but that is now what the kids in rural high schools are characterizing this proposal by the reformists, both Democrats and Republicans, calling for new charter schools.

Mr. Secretary, I was happy to hear you talk about the fact that we are redefining public education, because that is what is going on in Minnesota. It is not the private schools against the public schools. This is within the jurisdiction of a community trying to determine what public entity ought to take responsibility for education. It might be the school district, it might be another school district, it might be the State board of education, or it might be conceivably—they have not gotten to this point in Minnesota—but it could be the city, the county, a business, or somebody else.

The Chairman may recall when the new Mayor of Washington, DC., Sharon Pratt Dixon, was here, I asked her a question about

would it not be neat if all of the people within the government of the District of Columbia could get involved in the business of education. One of the things that came out in our discussions and that is coming out in Minnesota, as you look at the sort of outcomes based education at work, is that you have to have a way to agree among the various parties involved on what your outcomes will be. Then you have to make a contract that this is what the outcomes will be 5 years from now, 6 years from now, 8 years from now, and we make a contract on how to do that. That is the way they are headed in Minnesota. Then they have some monitoring systems that they will be put in place to monitor the progress toward these agreed upon outcomes.

The type of school that is involved here, whoever takes on this outcome schools challenge, has to be open to everyone. You cannot take just the best and the brightest, you cannot exclude racial minorities, it cannot exclude people with disabilities, it cannot exclude students who have not succeeded in other environments, it cannot exclude students who profess or do not profess certain religious beliefs, and the bill for all of this is paid on the same basis as we pay for public education.

The key is they get rid of the do's and don't's, you know, do this, don't do that, have X number of this, have X number of that. It is all based on what are the results.

What they contemplate doing in my State and Senator Wellstone's State, the State of Minnesota, is that these schools do not have to be 6-year elementary schools or 2-year or 3-year junior high schools or anything like that. They can be anything they want as long as they meet their prescribed outcomes. The City of Rochester is going to be one of the demonstrations. They can decide whether these new schools are going to teach one grade or 13 grades. They can decide whether the school is going to teach math and science or if it is going to teach something else, but there is a contractual relationship between the community and these new schools to get to meet certain goals. So the kids in that community are going to have some choices.

So, Mr. Secretary, I went into this because I have read so much in the last few days about what choice means and I have heard so much in the questions here, that I would just, in defense of your proposal and in defense of what the President is trying to do, try to say there is a model out there in Paul Wellstone's home State and my home State that I do not think should scare a whole heck of a lot of people, because there are all kinds of folks that are for it, and it is not divided Democrats or Republicans, rich and poor. In fact, the poor like it a lot better than other folks.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Senator, thank you for that. The examples are always more helpful than abstract notions. The charter schools are exactly the kind of thing that the President contemplates encouraging.

You are right, lots of people like that idea. Albert Shanker, for example, likes them, because he sees those as what he calls merit schools. There is about $100 million in the President's proposal that will be coming up in the next 3 weeks, which is the merit school idea that has been in the Excellence in Educational Act. What has been remodeled somewhat in our own thinking is the

notion of becoming more of an incentive school idea. It would reward schools which establish themselves as outcome schools—schools that are successful in helping children reach those goals.

That kind of thinking, which thinking is best done locally, is the kind of thinking that we would like to encourage and call the Nation's attention to, and support with such Federal support as the merit school proposal.

Senator DURENBERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, I have just a few more questions.

I gather that in the choice concept you include in here the parochial schools and private schools as well as the public schools. I am just wondering if that is the case whether they will also have requirements in terms of protections of the handicapped; what will happen in States which have requirements in terms of certain textbooks; certain States have certification requirements for teachers. Would it be your broad sense that those kinds of requirements which are now in effect in these States, with regard to protection of the handicapped, be included?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Senator, as I said earlier, any school, even a parochial school, that was to accept students who brought with them a government scholarship or government would have to be publicly accountable. I think this would then be a good time for us to take a look at all the rules and regulations that we have on our schools that we now call public schools and decide whether they may be part of the reason for the problem.

I don't think I ought to try to prescribe that generally. Obviously we have a commitment to students with disabilities and students from many different backgrounds. But whether you want to just take exactly the same rules and regulations that are on all of the public schools now and put them on any independent school which would accept such students—I think the better thing to do would be to take a look and see why in the middle of New York City you might have a parochial school serving inner city children for half the cost of the public school and see if there might not be some rules on the public school that interfere with it serving those students at a good cost.

But the model that Senator Durenberger talked about, taking all comers, trying to serve them effectively, appeals to me as a way to go about it.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, if you make Chapter 1 a voucher so children could go to whatever school they wanted to, would you also have the protections for those children if they are disabled or handicapped—Federal?

Secretary ALEXANDER. That's something we'd have to discuss. What we have proposed is that the local school district would devise its own plan. If Minnesota were to devise a plan that permitted outcome schools, and its system of education seemed to properly support children of many different backgrounds and those with disabilities, then we would like for the Federal money to follow the child.

The CHAIRMAN. So you are suggesting that if they provide those kinds of protections at the State or the local level, it wouldn't be necessary, but if they don't provide those kinds of protections conceptually, would it be necessary or not?

Secretary ALEXANDER. What we're talking about here, as you know much better than I, is the most complex part of our education laws.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand.

Secretary ALEXANDER. We're working through that pretty carefully in the next two or 3 weeks. We don't want to jeopardize children. We want to increase their opportunities. So I hear the thrust of your questions, and we'll try to take that into account as we come up with our proposals.

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned the issue of accountability. As you well know, the fastest growing education program is the deficit in the student loan programs—hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars. We've got a hemorrhage there, and the taxpayers are concerned. Many would-be students have been misinformed or even bilked in many instances by the 5,000 proprietary schools.

We spent a good deal of time trying to figure out how we were going to ensure that there would be accountability. Now we've got some 25,000 private schools, and just as we are focusing on trying to work with the Department of Education to make sure we insist that taxpayers' money when it is focused on education is going to be protected and utilized for education, we are also trying to deal with these proprietary schools and establish fair kinds of standards.

There are some who suggest that we are potentially, in opening up the 25,000 schools at the elementary and secondary level, that what we're talking about is not kids who hopefully would have better sense, more information and better judgment in making a choice, but we're talking about children's elementary and secondary education. I think one of the questions you're going to have to deal with is how are we going to make sure that those individuals who make that choice are going to get the kind of quality that they should have, and that when we have about $6 billion in Chapter 1 money that we're not going to get the hucksters who have been out there, misleading many young people into many of these schools, dipping into the $6 billion of Chapter 1 money.

What would you say to that concern?

Secretary ALEXANDER. I'd say that's a concern. Of the concerns that have been raised about the idea of expanding a family's range of choices as to the school their child attends, that would be the one that I think I would want to work the hardest on. I found when I arrived the concern you mentioned about student loan defaults, the Pell Grants involved a concern about some quality problems—quality problems in the terms of the granting of those and the use of those. More problems are not as evident as others because no one has to pay these grants back; they may just slip away.

I think in higher education, in order to make the system of choice that we have had there since the GI Bill was passed and the Pell Grant was enacted, in order to make all that meaningful, we have to do a much better job in terms of quality control and accountability for institutions that take these students without just putting an intolerably heavy Federal Government hand on colleges and universities.

As we look at the idea that elementary and secondary students might choose to go to schools that they believe are better—and of

course the whole purpose of this is it gives families a choice to create better schools, not worse schools—then we'd want to make sure the Government money followed them to quality schools. I would think that local school districts could do that.

If all of our elementary and secondary schools were up-to-date and serving the needs of the children as well as they could be, there wouldn't be much need for talking about this. Obviously there is great uneasiness. There was a story in the New York Times on Sunday which I thought was awfully well-done that compared an excellent public school and an excellent parochial school side-by-side.

There are significant reasons why children ought to have a choice of those schools. What we are suggesting is that as part of a comprehensive plan about how to move America toward the goals, that ought to be part of the discussion.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree, and again just to reiterate, I favor the choice system. We have seen some excellent examples in my own State. There is much that needs to be done in the elementary and secondary education.

Quite frankly, when we talk about the Pell Grant and the GI Bill, we have never talked about the GI Bill and Pell grants for 7-year-olds or 8-year-olds. This is a pretty different kettle of fish. We can talk about the concept of choice, but still there is a pretty broad distinction in terms of a higher education which is basically voluntary education, and then elementary, where we are talking about 7- and 8-year-olds.

Let me ask you this. Would the private and parochial schools, the fundamentalist schools, be eligible for that $1 million?

Secretary ALEXANDER. If the governor and the State established a process to select these break-the-mold schools, and the congressional districts said we would like in Minnesota, for example, for the outcome schools, if they were public or independent, to be a part of that, then we would say fine. That ought to be a State or a local decision. We have no problem with it at all if a State or local government would like to make that part of the process.

The CHAIRMAN. So if the State makes the judgment and decision that they want to give the $1 million to a fundamentalist school or to a parochial school, you would go along with that?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Well, it would depend on the application. The answer to that is yes if were a better application than any other. Or another example would be if the mayor of the District came in and said that what we'd like to do is organize a school run by the Smithsonian Institution, and that is our recommendation. It doesn't report to the school board; it reports to the Smithsonian. We are going to watch it, and we have devised a method of public accountability. It is independent. I would think that ought to be a possibility, too.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you about two different areas. Many have been impressed by the systemic efforts that some States have made—Kentucky comes to mind—in dealing with overhauling their school systems. Would you consider providing seed resources or incentive grants to States that are attempting to deal with those issues as well?

Secretary ALEXANDER. Senator, the answer off-the-cuff would be no, I wouldn't recommend that. The amount of money that the States spend is so vast compared to the amount of money that we spend on that area that I would think that a little bit of Federal money in a systemic way would not make much difference.

The governor and the legislature have just got to come to grips—or in that case, the courts—with what to do and do it, I think a grant to a State to cause it to be bold wouldn't make it bold.

The CHAIRMAN. That they are either going to do it or they are not going to do it.

Secretary ALEXANDER. I think so. I think we can broadly encourage that through a systemic presidential strategy such as the one the President described. Within that there can be specific Federal incentives which might help—like you mentioned the institutes for teachers which you favor and which we favor, too. That could help.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me focus your attention on the 70 percent of students who are not college-bound in terms of the transition from school to work. We haven't talked about that here.

Secretary ALEXANDER. No, we haven't.

The CHAIRMAN. We've talked about a variety of different issues including school readiness, having the children ready to go to school when they are eligible to go to school, but I'd like you to now just focus for a few minutes if you would on the transition for those who will not go into higher education but into work and how you intend to try and coordinate that with I imagine the Department of Labor, what ideas do you have on this and how do you see the private sector moving into this.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for bringing that up. That's the President's Track 3, and we have not talked about that much today, as well as Track 1. Right up at the top of better and more accountable schools are the world class standards in the five core subjects. In addition to that, the goals panel would take into account the work of the SCANS commission and the other work which has been done by the Department of Labor over the last few years to try to describe the skills that a young person might need to have who was going directly into work instead of a from a job.

For example, the Saturn headlight assembly team needs to know reading and math, which are two of those skills, but they also need to know how to handle an inventory and teamwork. Those are the kinds of skills that the SCANS commission is describing.

Secretary Martin as head of the Department of Labor, which has most of the Federal programs in this area, will take the lead on that, working with Betsy Brandt, the assistant secretary for adult and vocational education in our department. We think we very much need to explore and provide a clear and more productive track for students who are moving directly from high school into work.

First they need a liberal education. They all need to learn reading, math, history, geography and science whatever they are going to do. But then those who are going more quickly into work rather than going through a college experience need to have some other skills and knowledge. That's what the SCANS commission and other commissions have been working on.

That is a very important part of the strategy. We look forward to working with you in developing any sort of legislation that might need to be developed there.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we hope that in your may recommendations to the extent that you can you will give us whatever insights you have. This will depend, obviously, on the Secretary of Labor, and we will work with you in terms of moving that process along as well.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hatch.

Senator HATCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I don't want to keep you any longer, but I did have one question that maybe you'd care to answer in writing, but basically it is this. It seems to me that the reason we have forced so many people to attend local and public schools is because of our heavy reliance on local property taxes as a source of revenue for the schools.

You don't have to answer this now, but I'd like to ask if you are planning on reviewing that to see if there is any better way of helping to resolve these problems.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Senator, I think I can answer that now. I don't have any proposals for telling a State how to tax itself.

Senator HATCH. You don't want to get into that quagmire.

Secretary ALEXANDER. You know, they just had a big fight in Oregon where Oregon has a situation where they have a Federal income tax and a property tax, no sales tax. Now they've got a new limitation on property taxes, and that is squeezing the schools. They are going to have to come to grips in Oregon with what kind of schools they want and whether they are good enough to require additional investment. If so, whether that means they need to change their tax structure. That is a question every State is going to have to wrestle through for itself.

I think the one thing the President can help do is alert America to the problem that we have. This problem is that we have a very serious situation in what we know and are able to do. We are going to have to do more and cause the country to ask itself, what will that take. That may take more money, but first it is going to take changes in attitude and changes in structure.

Senator HATCH. I appreciate it.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your having this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. I would dearly love to follow up on the question raised by the Senator from Utah. Let me just make one specific request of you, Mr. Secretary, which is that before you introduce the choice plan I would really appreciate a little more specificity. I think there have been a variety of questions raised about potential abuses of one kind of another and concerns about accountability and what it means, especially when the private schools become a part of it and how they become accountable to public authority.

I hope that before you introduce the plan that over the next month you will work in some specific language.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator. In fact, that's one reason I appreciate Senator Kennedy's invitation today because I like working this way rather than just coming up and plopping on

your desk something that we've done and then you have to attack it. Maybe I can get an idea during these discussions of the concerns you have and the suggested things you'd like to see and even do some work with you between now and the time we come up to try to at least let you know what is coming.

So we'll do our best to do that, and we appreciate the suggestion.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you, and I'd like to talk with you a little bit later.

Secretary ALEXANDER. OK. We'll follow up.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cochran.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I thought you might be interested, Mr. Secretary, in this morning's Commercial Appeal editorial. I just went by my office to see some constituents, and this was on my desk, and I brought it back with me. The editorial describes the President's proposals that have been made, and most of the comments here are favorable, but the bottom line I think is clearly favorable.

I am going to ask that I be allowed to put this in the record, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be so included.

[The Commercial Appeal editorial follows:]

[FROM THE COMMERICAL APPEAL, MEMPHIS, TN, APRIL 23, 1991]

SCHOOL STORM

BUSH BECOMES EDUCATION PRESIDENT

President Bush's education proposals have struck Congress with the speed and power of a political Desert Storm.

Praise has come from Democrats and educators as well as Republicans and businessmen. Some professional cynics seem to have been too stunned to do much more than mumble congratulations while scavenging among old speeches for usable criticisms.

There will be fierce debate when the congressional committees unlimber their partisan arsenals, but prognosticators are saying early on that the administration's package will pass in whole or close to it.

Perhaps the most controversial part—parental choice, whereby federal dollars could follow students to private as well as public schools—will end up in court over separation of church and state. It will draw spirited attacks from those who fear it would weaken public schools.

The key elements of the President's proposals are scope and initiative—elements that we're certain can be attributed largely to the new education secretary, Lamar Alexander.

In one swift move, Bush has turned himself into the "education president," as he promised in his presidential race. And he has done it with meaty, provocative and even elegant ideas.

Albert Shanker, long-time president of the American Federation of Teachers, wrote in The New York Times: "This initiative marked a turning point in American education. Never before has a president of the United States said that the federal government has a major, ongoing responsibility for improving the quality of elementary and secondary education."

Shanker had reservations about whether the proposals would succeed in the tough, workday world of American schools, which have to struggle under the impact of all the nation's social ills. The union leader was honest enough, however, no acknowledge that the President and his education secretary have laid out a federal role in education that may make a major difference in the quality of many schools, across the board and not just in specialized areas such as education for the handicapped or the gifted.

It's a role that relies on new ideas more than on old ones, on incentives more than on massive funding, and on the common sense, experience and resourcefulness

of local school authorities and teachers more than on the cunning of lobbyists or creative maze building of bureaucrats.

The highlights are impressive. Besides the choice plan, they are:

—Grants of $1 million each to 535 communities for experimental efforts "to reinvent" American schools. This will help tap the insights and energies of people who really determine what happens in schools—principals, teachers and local officials. It also will support state initiatives for school reform, including those in Tennessee.

Theodore R. Sizer, a professor of education at Brown University and a leading reform theorist, said the grant idea "goes to the heart of the (education) problem." The Coalition of Essential Schools, which Sizer heads, promotes innovative teaching and learning techniques. But "the scale of our work isn't big enough," Sizer said.

—National testing. Bush proposes that every student be tested in five core subjects—English, mathematics, science, geography and history—in grates 4, 8 and 12. He proposes that the results be used to evaluate how schools and school systems, as well as students and teachers, are doing, and that they also be used by college admission officers and job interviewers.

There is concern that schools with students from poor families won't be able to compete with schools in more affluent areas. Those differences could be taken into account, however, or minimized by measuring "value added"—how much progress a student makes rather than how his or her knowledge and skills compare with others. Parents and taxpayers need to have a better idea of how their own schools are performing. There's no way except by testing. Moreover, if students will have to compete in an international workplace, then the standards of their academic and vocational education had better be at that level.

The President's proposals also would give business and industry greater opportunity to become involved in school reform, encourage rewards for outstanding teachers and provide incentives for states to certify teachers who lack traditional teacher training.

MOST BIPARTISAN support for the package came from officials who have had to fight the battles of school reform themselves.

"We're on the right track finally," said former Democratic Gov. James Hunt of North Carolina.

"This is what I've been waiting for for eight years," said former Republican Gov. Thomas Kean of New Jersey.

There's an enormous amount of work to be done, and a huge number of hurdles to clear, before anyone can evaluate the impact of the proposals.

Even so, Bush has made a strong—perhaps historic—beginning. And Alexander, so far, has lived up to the expectations that followed him to Washington.

Senator COCHRAN. It says: "There is an enormous amount of work to be done and a huge number of hurdles to clear before anyone can evaluate the impact of the proposals. Even so, Bush has made a strong—perhaps historic—beginning. And Alexander, so far, has lived up to the expectations that followed him to Washington."

Mr. Chairman, I think the Memphis Commercial Appeal points out that there were high expectations of the Secretary and that he is doing an excellent job and is living up to those expectations.

Another item that was on my desk, too, Mr. Chairman, is an article from the Clarion-Ledger in Jackson, MS today. Yesterday they had a conference down there sponsored by the Stennis Institute—this is an institute that Congress created to honor our former colleague John Stennis, and one of the things they do is from time to time get people together to talk about current issues.

One of the things they were talking about yesterday was the President's education program under the sponsorship of the Stennis Institute. Frank Newman was there, who is the author of a series of reports, according to this article, on higher education. They asked him about what he thought about President Bush's new education plan. He, incidentally, is the chief of the Education Commission of the States.

He said, "What the President is trying do is create a new system. What is so striking about the plan is that it is an initiative in which the Federal Government encourages schools to design how education should be." And he goes on to very favorably compliment the plan and the proposal of the President.

Another participant at this conference was Jackie Knox, who used to be on the staff of this committee, and all of us remember her.

So I would ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, that this article be printed in the record.

The CHAIRMAN. So ordered.

[Clarion-Ledger article follows:]

[FROM THE CLARION-LEDGER, JACKSON, MS, APRIL 23, 1991]

EDUCATION EXPERT PRACTICES BUSH'S SCHOOL PLAN

President Bush's new education plan could correct much of what's wrong with American schools, the Education Commission of the States chief said Monday.

Frank Newman, author of a series of reports on higher education, said it will probably take 10 years to create a national education system where children are challenged to think creatively and schools are encouraged to try new approaches.

But he said Bush's plan, announced last Thursday by U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander, is innovative because it's relatively free of federal regulations and dictates. Instead, local schools would be given education goals and the incentives and freedom to meet them.

"What the president is trying to do is to create a new system," Newman told participants in "Southern Women in Public Service; Making a Difference," a seminar concluding today at the Ramada Renaissance in Jackson.

"What is so striking about the plan is that it's an initiative in which the federal government encourages schools to design how education should be."

Newman said education should learn lessons from corporate business and begin to encourage wide-spread problem-solving, creative thinking and and responsibility of its schools, teachers and students.

"We must change schools so the center of activity is at the school site," he said. "That is going to require extensive retraining...It is just going to be hard, dogged work."

Also Monday, women who rose through ranks to achieve top positions in state and federal government encouraged participants to pursue public service careers.

"There are no limits to what women can do. There are no guidelines and no maps," said Jacqueline Knox Brown, one of eight assistant secretaries to U.S. Secretary of Energy James Watkins and a former key staffer to U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran.

Brown, who dropped out of a Washington high school at age 17 after becoming pregnant, raised her child while attending college and began government services as a clerk.

Brown said she realized how far she'd come the day she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as assistant secretary for congressional and intergovernmental affairs for the Department of Energy.

"I'm the little kid who dropped out of high school with a baby, and now I'm about to be appointed to a job by the president," she said. "It's awesome."

Women in public service need to mentor others and encourage other women to seek promotions, said Amy Whitten, administrator of the Mississippi Supreme Court.

"We have to make the most of our opportunities," she said. "We don't do a good enough job of inspiring women to be in (public service) for the long haul."

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for being generous with your recognition of Senators. I think we had good attendance this morning, and it was good of you to convene the hearing and let us have a chance to review and question the Secretary on the substance of the President's proposals.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Cochran.

I want to express my appreciation to Secretary Lamar Alexander for his presence here this morning. The secretary came up last week, prior to the time that the President announced his program, and sat down with the members of this committee and the House, the committees that have the prime jurisdiction, and gave us good insight as to what the President was going to announce. That was the first time in my recollection that we have had that kind of initiative by the Secretary of Education. So we are very grateful for all of the efforts he has made to sound out the different ideas and recommendations in this area of enormous importance to public policy, and I think all of us are very grateful as well for the responses which you have given.

I am hopeful that as we move through these next few weeks, that we can work with you and be responsive and make recommendations and give ideas and be available. We understand very well that there will be some areas that you are going to give priority to which others might have differing views on; that is going to work both ways, I'm sure. But I think we are off to a very constructive and positive start, and I think the secretary deserves a good deal of commendation for that.

The secretary established an education goal for himself this morning in getting that legislation up here in May, and I am sure he will meet that education goal.

I want to seriously say that the Leader wants to give the opportunity to the President to make the recommendations, and we will, but he has also indicated to us that he does plan to move ahead on our S.2 proposal in a timely manner. So we will keep in touch with regard to the timeliness, but we're very hopeful that we can have those recommendations in late May so we can take early action in this committee.

I thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. We look forward to working with you.

Secretary ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee stands in recess.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

○